

Approved For Release 2007/03/13

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Top Secret 233

(Security Classification) 25X1

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday July 19, 1976

CI NIDC 76-168C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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State Dept. review completed

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25X1 National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday July 19, 1976

25X1 [redacted] The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials. 25X1

LEBANON

25X1 [redacted] Palestinian leaders this weekend reiterated their refusal to negotiate with Damascus until the Syrians honor their agreement to withdraw troops from southern and central Lebanon.// The Palestinians' intransigence appears to have set the scene for Christian and Syrian troops to implement a new coordinated military strategy worked out last week.//

25X1 [redacted] //On the basis of our understanding of Christian and Syrian intentions, we do not expect either to plan any military moves that would directly jeopardize the US evacuation scheduled for this week. However, the announcement of the evacuation, coupled with the collapse of mediation efforts and fear of new Syrian military moves, has prompted widespread rumors of a major Christian-Syrian assault on west Beirut.//

25X1 [redacted] The rumors have been fostered by an article published over the weekend by a pro-leftist Beirut newspaper alleging that the Syrians, the Christians, and the US plan to launch a final attack on the Palestinians and leftists tomorrow--"just after the US evacuation is completed." The paper described in some detail an alleged plan for a three-pronged attack on west Beirut in which the US Sixth Fleet would provide a barrier to Soviet intervention.

25X1 [redacted] The official Palestinian news agency yesterday flatly contradicted stories of US involvement in such a conspiracy in an attempt to prevent panic in west Beirut and in an apparent show of concern over the safety of US and other foreign nationals. The rumors, however, have already increased apprehension throughout the city and are probably widely accepted by those undisciplined Lebanese and Palestinian radicals who pose the greatest threat to the evacuation.

25X1 [redacted] Radio broadcasts by the Christians promising that they will soon "liberate" west Beirut and warning responsible citizens to leave the city have compounded the problem of

25X1 [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] deflating the rumors. [redacted] 25X1

Christian-Syrian Military Plan

25X1 [redacted] //The Christian delegation that mapped out the plan in Damascus last week reportedly received final approval for it from Christian leaders and returned immediately to Syria to ask that the plan be implemented this week.//

25X1 [redacted] //During the first phase, the Christians would concentrate on opening the road to Zahlah and expanding their control of east Beirut. The Syrians would intensify their blockade of Palestinian and leftist strongholds in the north and would interdict access routes in central Lebanon leading to leftist-controlled territory south of Beirut.//

25X1 [redacted] //Although the plan then calls for a joint advance on west Beirut, US officials in Beirut believe this attack would involve only an attempt to gain control of the hotel district and to establish a narrow corridor along the northern coastal perimeter of the city that would presumably include Bain Militaire, the military beach on the far western side of the city.//

25X1 [redacted] Although military activity in most of Lebanon remained low throughout the weekend, there are indications that Syrian forces have begun implementing the new plan in central Lebanon and have dropped all pretense of carrying out their pledge to withdraw from Sawfar, on the Beirut-Damascus highway. Unconfirmed press reports say the Syrians may even have moved additional forces across the border to reinforce their positions on this road.

25X1 [redacted] Fighting continued around Tall Zatar refugee camp yesterday, but there was little military activity along the other major confrontation lines in the capital. The area around Beirut airport and along the adjacent western highway was relatively quiet over the weekend. The Palestinians, however, reportedly expect the Christians to try to silence artillery fire coming from Sabra refugee camp. The camp is just north of the airport and close to the main highway. [redacted] 25X1

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EGYPT

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[] Finance ministers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates met in Cairo Saturday and agreed to a draft proposal for a Saudi-sponsored fund of \$2 billion over the next five years to bolster Egypt's economy.

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[] The finance ministers approved the new aid fund despite Egypt's postponement of economic reforms that had been recommended by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for its support for other international borrowing.

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[] According to an announcement made by Egyptian Finance Minister Ahmed Bhu Ismail, the fund would be channeled through, and presumably managed by, a new body to be known as the Gulf Organization for Development in Egypt.

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25X1 [REDACTED] Although Egypt reportedly will not be able to borrow
at will from the fund, it could borrow elsewhere to meet its
25X1 immediate needs, utilizing the aid fund as collateral. [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1 [REDACTED]
CHINA

25X1 [REDACTED] The recent deterioration in Chairman Mao Tse-tung's
health may have intensified the power struggle in Peking and
brought the People's Liberation Army closer to the political
center stage.

25X1 [REDACTED] Radicals and moderates alike recognize that the mili-
tary leadership can exert heavy influence on the political
struggle. As the army's involvement deepens, however, it be-
comes more likely that factionalism will grow within its own
ranks. Military men may eventually emerge with a larger voice
in China's political process.

25X1 [REDACTED] Despite this risk, the radicals in particular
seem to be trying harder to enlist the support of influential
military leaders. [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1 [REDACTED] The radicals have also been vocal and direct in their
appeals, perhaps because they feel that time is against them.
Shortly before the announcement that Mao would no longer receive
foreign visitors, the radicals launched a propaganda effort de-
signed to appeal to army leaders who have doubts about some of
the military policies associated with the moderates. Their arti-
cles focus on a model soldier, Li Yen-ching, who charged even
before the campaign against Teng Hsiao-ping that the former
vice premier emphasized military proficiency at the expense of
political training.

25X1 [REDACTED] Before this propaganda drive, the left had
tended to shy away from this theme, which runs counter to the
views of much of the military establishment. [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1 [REDACTED] Army leaders in the provinces are apparently unenthusiastic about the radicals. So far only a handful of provincial broadcasts has publicized the Li Yen-ching model or echoed Peking's criticism of Teng's military policies.

25X1 [REDACTED] The radicals' best prospect for support, however, probably lies outside the central military establishment. The political careers of many officers in the military regions and districts have suffered as a result of efforts by moderates to separate them from local civilian affairs while enhancing the role of civilian party bureaucrats.

25X1 [REDACTED] The radicals probably recognize that their popularity within the military is not high, but they may hope to develop enough support to dilute some of the moderates' backing in the military. The radicals' efforts, however, also run the risk of hardening the opposition of military leaders sympathetic to the moderates, some of whom may have not yet taken a clear partisan stand. [REDACTED]

FTAI

25X1 [REDACTED] The resignation on Saturday of Ali Aref Bourhan, the Afar president of the local government in the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, paves the way for the creation of a broad-based coalition government in Djibouti.

25X1 [REDACTED] Aref, who in all likelihood would have been voted out next week by the local assembly, has been living on borrowed time since early June. At that time, the French engineered an agreement among the three major political groups in the FTAI that will give a greater political role to the Issas and other ethnic Somalis who constitute a majority of the population.

25X1 [REDACTED] Aref, a long-time French protege, bitterly opposed the agreement, although representatives of his party went along with it. He opposed it not only because he realized that it would lead to his political downfall, but also because he contends that Issa domination of Djibouti is the first step to the annexation of the territory by Somalia.

25X1 [REDACTED] The French are betting that stability is more likely to prevail in the pre- and post-independence periods--a referendum on independence will probably be held next March--if the

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government in Djibouti is dominated by Issas than if it is controlled by the Afars and headed by someone like Aref. There was serious, politically inspired violence between Afar and Issa tribesmen as recently as July 10, when at least 13 were killed in riots. [REDACTED]

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